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VIDEO: Governor Northam Highlights Progress of Capitol Square Construction, Renovation

RICHMOND—Governor Ralph Northam and the Department of General Services (DGS) today released a behind-the-scenes [video tour](#) of three high-profile Capitol Square construction and renovation projects: the new General Assembly Building, Old City Hall and Morson’s Row.

“We are excited to give Virginians a peek behind the curtain at the tremendous work being done to transform Capitol Square in Richmond,” **said Governor Northam**. “Much of this progress has gone unseen with fewer visitors to Capitol Square over the last year, and many of our state employees and legislators working remotely. The success of these projects is a testament to the strong stewardship of these historic buildings and grounds by the Department of General Services.”

The video takes viewers inside construction of the new General Assembly Building and the renovation of Old City Hall and Morson’s Row, two historically significant buildings around the Capitol Complex. Fuel Creative, a woman-owned small business in Richmond, produced the video.

“The advancement of these projects at Capitol Square is evidence of the collaboration between the Northam Administration and the General Assembly,” **said Secretary of Administration Grindly Johnson**. “We are all looking on with excitement as we watch the new General Assembly Building rise and these historic buildings being brought back to life.”

“We are excited to showcase the progress we’ve made on these three iconic buildings, which are well on their way toward completion,” **DGS Director Joe Damico added**. “DGS is proud to have the opportunity to transform these historic buildings into more functional, modern spaces for our legislators, state employees, and visitors.”

The old General Assembly Building was an aggregate of four buildings of vastly different architectural styles that were constructed over 55 years and joined together. The first of the original buildings was classically designed and used to be the Life Insurance Company of Virginia. Due to the high level of craftsmanship of this 1912 building, a decision was made to keep the south and east sections of the building’s façade and incorporate it into the new building design.

The new 414,000-square-foot General Assembly Building is being constructed on the same footprint as the old 320,000-square-foot building. When it is complete next summer, the new General Assembly Building will be 14 stories above grade and one below, with one tunnel connecting it to a new parking deck that will be built at the corner of Ninth and Broad streets and another connecting it to the Capitol extension. The new building will feature a large first-floor cafeteria, more efficient committee and subcommittee spaces, and convenient public spaces for those who visit to participate in the legislative process.

“The construction of the new General Assembly Building blends the historically significant architecture of the old building with all of the technology and functionality of a modern space to serve as the seat of government,” **said Chinh Vu, Director of the Office of Construction Management for Special Projects at DGS** and the project manager for the General Assembly build.

Old City Hall, which was constructed between 1886 and 1894, is a National Historic Landmark and stands out on Capitol Square for its Gothic Revival architecture. The building served as Richmond’s City Hall through the 1970s, and the Commonwealth purchased it in 1983, which was the last time it was renovated.

The current renovation is the most comprehensive since the building’s construction. It includes replacing all electrical, mechanical and plumbing systems, refurbishing windows, restoring the roof and exterior stone walls, modernizing the interior while restoring its original finishes, making the building ADA-accessible, and installing new elevators. DGS also will restore the clock and replace the skylight. The project is scheduled to be complete in the spring of 2022.

“It has been such an honor to oversee the renovation of Old City Hall, one of three National Historic Landmarks on Capitol Square,” **said Erich Thomas, DGS Project Manager** who is supervising the renovation. “Once we finish taking it back to its original look and updating the interior space for modern use, it will be one of the crown jewels of Capitol Square and Richmond.”

Morson’s Row, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, represents the last example of residential row homes on Governor Street. Named for the Richmond attorney who had the three Italianate-style attached row houses built in the 1850s, Morson’s Row was bought by the Commonwealth in the 1970s and 1980s. Once this project is complete in late summer of 2021, it will return to state agency office use.

The project consists of renovating the buildings’ interiors and exteriors, as well as construction of a new tower and other building elements. While the renovation will provide a modern workspace, it will keep intact historic details like the ornamental marble mantles in the former parlors.

“The renovation of Morson’s Row is unique in that we are taking what was originally three historic row houses, and repurposing the space into state-of-the-art offices,” **said Brett Keesecker, DGS Project Manager** overseeing the Morson’s Row renovation. “This challenge

has allowed us to really get creative in re-envisioning the interior of these buildings, and we are looking forward to presenting the finished product.”

For more information about these projects, visit dgs.virginia.gov.

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